

A Tiger in the Zoo



About the Poet

George Leslie Norris (1921-2006) was a prize winning Welsh poet and short story writer. He is considered as most important Welsh writers of the post war period and his literary works have won many prizes. His famous works are Finding Gold, The loud winder, phoenix living poets series: Ransoms, etc

A Tiger in the Zoo Poem Introduction

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A Tiger in the Zoo Summary of the poem

The poem begins with a description of a tiger that is very beautiful and is walking in his little cage. He has beautiful stripes on his skin and has velvet like soft paws. But the tiger is not happy and is quite angry about being confined in the cage. The poet says that if the tiger was not confined to the zoo cage, he would have been hiding himself behind the long grass near some water body, in order to catch its prey that is the deer. Also, he would have terrorised the residents of the villages around the forest area. But the reality is totally opposite to this. He was confined in a cage which was made up of strong building material and he was helpless there.

A Tiger in the Zoo Summary of the poem

He could not show his power to the visitors, therefore, never tried to terrorize them. The tiger is described as being powerless and agonized by the poet. He says that during night also he is alone, hearing the voice of the patrolling vehicles of police and looking at the stars. The cage life has totally changed the tiger's personality. The poet is trying to say that the animal which is famous for its fearlessness and freedom is confined and sad due to the human beings who want to derive pleasure by looking at him in the zoo cage.



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

He stalks in his vivid stripes

The few steps of his cage,

On pads of velvet quiet,

In his quiet rage.



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Word meanings

Stalks: follows

Vivid: bright colored

Pads: paws of tiger

Rage: anger



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Here the poet says that the tiger that is confined in the zoo moves around in the cage under his bright coloured skin. He further says that the tiger can take only a few steps because the cage is small and it is not easy to move in it. One cannot hear his footsteps because he has very soft feet, like velvet because of which there is no sound of the tiger's footsteps. The tiger tries to control his anger by quietly walking in the limited area of his cage. He is angry because he is not free.



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Literary devices

Rhyme scheme: abcb (cage-rage)

Personification: The tiger is personified because the poet refers him as 'he'.

Metaphor: Tiger's paws are compared with velvet (pads of velvet)

Enjambment: Sentence is continuing to next line without any punctuation mark.



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Imagery: poet tries to create an image about the tiger (He stalks in his vivid stripes The few steps of his cage)

Consonance: use of 's' sound (stalks, his, stripes)

Assonance: use of vowel sound 'I' (in his vivid stripes)

Oxymoron: use of adjectives opposite in meaning (quiet rage)



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

He should be lurking in shadow,

Sliding through long grass

Near the water hole

Where plump deer pass.



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Lurking: To be hidden as to wait for your prey

The poet says that if this tiger was free, he would have hid himself behind the long grass near the water bodies so that he could easily catch a deer in order to have it as its food. Basically, the poet wants to say that the actual life of a tiger is to live in jungle where he could catch his prey and eat it but the tiger in the cage can not do so.



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Literary devices

Rhyme: rhyme scheme is abcb (grass-pass)

Enjambment: Line continues to next line without punctuation marks. (Sliding through....deer pass)

Alliteration: use of sound 'p' at the start of two words (plump pass)

Imagery: The poet has tries to create an image of tiger's activities (lurking in shadow).



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

He should be snarling around houses

At the jungle's edge,

Baring his white fangs, his claws,

Terrorising the village!



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Word meanings

Snarling: warning sounds made by animals

Baring: uncovered

Fangs: Sharp tooth of animals

The poet says that if the tiger would have been free, he would have snarled around the houses located at the outskirts of the forest. He would terrorise people with his sharp tooth and claws. This would create fear among the people living in the villages

A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Literary devices

Rhyme Scheme: abcb rhyme scheme is followed (edge, village)

Enjambment: Line continues to next line without punctuation marks (He should be snarling around houses At the jungle's edge,)

Onomatopoeia: using words which denote sound (snarling)

Assonance: use of vowel sound 'o' and 'I' (should, around, houses), (Baring, his, white, his)

Consonance: use of consonant sound 's' (his, fangs, his, claws)



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

But he's locked in a concrete cell,

His strength behind bars,

Stalking the length of his cage,

Ignoring visitors



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Concrete: building made of bricks, cement, sand and water

Now the poet comes to the reality of the tiger that is inside the cage. He says that the tiger is confined in a strong cell which is made of strong building material. He further says that as the tiger is behind bars, so his ferociousness is also behind the bars. He just stalks in the cage. He never tries to terrorise the visitors because his power is restricted by the cage. Therefore, he never tries to terrorise the visitors as he cannot attack them.



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Literary devices

Rhyme Scheme: abcb rhyme scheme is followed (bars-visitors)

Personification: The tiger is personified because the poet refers him as 'he'.

Assonance: use of vowel sound 'e' (he, locked, concrete, cell)

Consonance: use of consonant sound 's' (his, strength, bars)

Alliteration: use of sound 'b' at the start of two words (behind bars)



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

He hears the last voice at night,

The patrolling cars,

And stares with his brilliant eyes

At the brilliant stars.



A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Word meanings

Patrolling: to guard, to vigil

The poet says that in the night, the tiger hears the sounds of the patrolling cars. Patrolling cars are the vehicles of police which are used to guard at night. So, in the night the tiger hears the sounds of these cars. He then stares at the shining stars with his shining eyes. The poet wants to say that the tiger is sad and as he is confined in the cage, so, he cannot do anything. Therefore, he stares at the stars in the night and tries to divert his thoughts towards them.

A Tiger in the Zoo Poem and Explanation

Literary devices:

Rhyme Scheme: abcb rhyme scheme is followed (cars-stars)

Enjambment: Line three continues to line four without any punctuation mark. (And stares with his brilliant eyes At the brilliant stars.)

Alliteration: use of sound 'h' in the starting of two words (he hears)

Assonance: use of 'I' sound (with, his, brilliant)



**THANK
YOU!**

